

Good Conduct And Good Character

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The one who has good etiquette, he has gained. The one who does not, he has lost.	3
The difference between knowledge and facts	4
Genuine beauty is beauty of knowledge and good conduct	5
Respect in the life of Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh <i>rahimahullāh</i>	7
Respect for one's teacher in one's heart	7
Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind <i>rahimahullāh</i> and his respect for his shaykh	8
Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind <i>rahimahullāh</i> and his respect for his teacher	8
Respect for his teacher's father	9
A unique incident depicting respect	9
Respect for elders	10
Sayings of the past elders with regard to good conduct	12
A very important point concerning good conduct	13
The understanding of Hadrat Abū Bakr <i>radiyallāhu 'anhu</i>	14
Good conduct means bringing comfort.....	14
Social dealings	16
Discomfort in the name of comfort.....	17
The importance of salāh with congregation	18

The following person is not permitted to come to the masjid	18
Kissing the Black Stone	19
Reading the Qur’ān in a loud voice.....	20
Examples of inconveniencing Muslims	20
Paying particular attention to social etiquette...	21
Rasūlullāh’s <i>sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam</i> manner of waking up for <i>tahajjud</i>	21
Read the book <i>Ādāb al-Mu’āsharat</i>	22
My personal experience.....	22
A unique incident of visiting the sick.....	23
Speaking on the telephone for long periods of time	25
Teachings of Rasūlullāh <i>sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam</i>	25

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ وَكَفَى، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الرُّسُلِ وَخَاتَمِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَعَلَى إِلِهِ الْأَصْفِيَاءِ
وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْأَتْقِيَاءِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِأَنَّ يُؤَدَّبَ الرَّجُلُ وَلَدَهُ
خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَنْ يَتَصَدَّقَ بِصَاعٍ، أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي، وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي، وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي، يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي. سُبْحَانَكَ
لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا، وَعَلَّمْنَا مَا
يَنْفَعُنَا.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا،
اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعِهِ وَأَرْوَاحِهِ
وَدَرَرَاتِهِ.

**The one who has good etiquette, he has gained.
The one who does not, he has lost.**

Respected 'ulamā', friends, elders, and dear youngsters! Good conduct is essential in the life of a believer. Nothing can be achieved without good conduct. There is a famous saying:

The one who has good etiquette, he has gained. The one who does not, he has lost.

The person with good conduct is the fortunate one. The person who lives a life of good character and conduct most certainly receives a share from Allāh's *ta'ālā* court. As for the person who is of bad character, he remains deprived. He receives nothing. For example, there is a student who wants to acquire knowledge. However, he is disrespectful

to his teacher, his books, and to the other means and instruments of knowledge. Such a student will not acquire any knowledge.

مَنْ لَا أَدَبَ لَهُ لَا عِلْمَ لَهُ

The one who has no etiquette will remain deprived of knowledge.

The difference between knowledge and facts

A student who always comes out first in his class but does not pay any attention to good conduct may say: “Despite my failings as regards good conduct, I always come out first in my class. Who says that a disrespectful student does not get knowledge?” This is a misunderstanding which stems from ignorance of the nature of knowledge. Such a student must ponder over the statement of Hadrat Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh*. He said: “Knowledge does not comprise of mere letters. Rather, it is a special *nūr* (light, effulgence) through which Allāh *ta’ālā* guides whomever He wills.”

These words and letters are not knowledge, but mere facts. Through these words, you learnt that such and such thing is *halāl*, and such and such thing is *harām*. Such and such thing is lawful, such and such thing is unlawful. This is not knowledge. Knowledge is a light which descends into the depths of the heart. It’s ray’s then emanate from it and spread throughout the body. It then compels every limb and part of the body to move according to the pleasure of Allāh *ta’ālā*. This is real and genuine knowledge. If you know that *salāh* five times a day is compulsory but you do not perform

them, then you do not really have knowledge of ṣalāh. Yes! The person who adheres to performing the five ṣalāhs after having learnt that they are compulsory, then it can be said of him that he has acquired knowledge of ṣalāh.

Genuine beauty is beauty of knowledge and good conduct

I had said in the beginning that the presence of good conduct is most important and essential in the life of a believer. Without it there can be no progress, and nothing can be attained. In fact, if good conduct is not found in a person, he is really an animal in the form of a human.

A poet says:

Through good conduct alone is a human a human. If there is no good conduct, he is an animal.

It is through good conduct that humaneness comes into a person and he is able to progress. The person who embellishes his self with knowledge and good conduct is considered good in the sight of people. On the other hand, the person who has no good conduct becomes a source of aversion and dislike. People do not like him. Such a person ought to be called a bankrupt person and an orphan. An Arab poet rightly said:

لَيْسَ الْجَمَالُ بِأَنْوَابٍ تُرَبِّبُنَا - بَلِ الْجَمَالُ جَمَالُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْأَدَبِ
وَلَيْسَ الْبَيْنَمُ الَّذِي قَدْ مَاتَ وَالِدُهُ - بَلِ الْبَيْنَمُ بَيْنَمُ الْعِلْمِ وَالْأَدَبِ

Genuine and complete beauty is not in clothes which beautify us. Rather, true beauty lies in the beauty of

knowledge and good conduct. An orphan is not one whose father has passed away. An orphan is one who is deprived of knowledge and good conduct.

A person who is not embellished with knowledge and good conduct, and is devoid of good character is not liked by anyone no matter how appealing his clothing may be. On the other hand, the poor pauper who possesses knowledge and good conduct, and is an embodiment of praiseworthy qualities will be loved by everyone and be worthy of respect because he is adorned with genuine beauty. For example, you have a person of dark complexion, thick lips, a flat nose, and abnormal height. Obviously, in the first instance of seeing him, people will not be very much inclined towards him. But within a short while, when they observe his character and mannerisms, and listen to his wise words, each person will be enamoured by him. On the other hand, a person of fair complexion, and wearing very beautiful clothes will attract people to his self in the beginning. But once they interact with him, his evil characteristics will come to the fore, and their hearts will very quickly turn away from him.

As I was saying, good conduct is very important, and our elders paid particular attention to it. We come across such incidents in the lives of our pious elders which leave us astounded. They were very fastidious about good character and conduct, showing us that this was an important part of their lives.

Respect in the life of Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh *rahimahullāh*

I heard from Maulānā Ayyūb Kholwādia Sāhib who was an associate of Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* that Hadrat was so overtaken by respect for Allāh *ta'ālā* that apart from absolute necessity such as *ihrām* and taking a bath, Hadrat would not remove his *topī* (hat) from his head. He would even wear it when he used to go to sleep. He used to say: “I feel ashamed to be bare-headed before Allāh *ta'ālā*.” So much of respect and etiquette are not necessary, but this is how Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was overcome by respect. He was thus compelled to do this. We must learn a lesson from this, and at least adhere to the essential level and amount of respect.

Respect for one's teacher in one's heart

One day, Hadrat Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh* said to one of his students: “Go to my room and bring a book from my cupboard.” The student got up immediately to carry out his instruction. But he thought to himself, “I do not know from which cupboard I must bring the book. It will be better if I asked before going.” So he asked: “Hadrat! From which cupboard must I get the book?” Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh* said: “You have been with me for the last eight years and you do not even know that I have just one cupboard in my room!?” The student replied: “Hadrat! The fact of the matter is that whenever I had the occasion to go to your room, it was in your presence. And I am not in the habit of looking around when I am in your presence. I consider it disrespectful to look around. This is why

I never had the opportunity to look on the right, left, front and back sections of your room. This is why I do not know [how many cupboards you have in your room].”

Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh* and respect for his shaykh

Look at the respect of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā Maḥmūd al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He was a personality who possessed many excellent qualities. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to refer to him as Shaykh al-‘Ālam (the shaykh of the world). He was the head teacher and shaykh al-Hadīth of Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband. He was such a senior personality, yet he had immense respect for his shaykh. He was a *murīd* of Quṭb Rabbānī Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh* used to go to his shaykh every Thursday from Deoband to Gangoh, and remain in the service of his shaykh until Friday. This remained his practice for many years. He would never miss this practice whether it was raining or extremely hot. Gangoh is thirty miles from Deoband. But look at the level of his respect. He would not go on any conveyance or vehicle to Gangoh; he would go on foot. This was the level of respect of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh*.

Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh* and his respect for his teacher

Like the respect which he had for his shaykh, he had a lot of love and respect for his teacher, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānautwī

rahimahullāh. This is why he rendered unmatched services to him. He was on a journey with him on one occasion and Hadrat Maulānā Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* fell critically ill and all those who were present lost hope in his survival. Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh* attended to him without any rest, as if neither day nor night existed. He remained awake for entire nights, and was more concerned about the comfort and rest of his teacher than his own.

Respect for his teacher's father

Let alone his teacher, he had absolute respect for his teacher's father. Hadrat Nānautwī's *rahimahullāh* father was on his death bed when he had diarrhoea and messed his bed. Those who were present were still looking at each other [not knowing what to do] while Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh* got up immediately and began collecting the stool with his hands, and went several times outside to throw it outside. Hadrat Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* [who was not present at the time] happened to come it. When he saw the scene before him, he was so pleased that he stood there and then occupied himself in *du'ā'*. The effect of a sincere teacher for his beloved student certainly had its effect, and Allāh *ta'ālā* turned Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan to Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind.

A unique incident depicting respect

I just remembered another incident depicting respect. Listen to it as well. There was a woman during the era of Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* who had leprosy. When she used to enter the

Haram Sharīf, a stink would emanate from her body which would cause much aversion to people. Hadrat 'Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu called for her and said: “Sister! You must not come to the Haram Sharīf because people are discomfited because of you. Allāh *ta'ālā* fully knows your intention. You will receive the full rewards by remaining in your house.”

The woman stopped coming to the Haram Sharīf. When Hadrat 'Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu passed away, some people went to her and said: “There is no restriction to your coming to the Haram Sharīf now.” The woman replied: “Hadrat 'Umar was not such that he must be obeyed when he was alive, and disobeyed when he has passed away. He will be obeyed under all conditions – both in life and in death.”

My dear friends! Look at the respect of this woman! What can be said about it! May Allāh *ta'ālā* inspire us as well. Āmīn.

Respect for elders

Dear brothers! Every believer has to become a person of good conduct and character. He has to have respect and love for everything which is worthy of respect, and he has to show the respect which is due to it. If the greatness and love for something is in the heart, there will certainly be respect for it. A poet says:

Love will automatically teach you the
etiquette of love.

We must have respect for our '*ulamā*', teachers, *mashā'ikh*, elders of the family, elders of the community, parents, etc. and accord each one the respect demanded by their position. Nowadays, there are many shortcomings in this regard. Let's take the example of our parents. Their favours on us are countless. What do they not do for us? They sacrifice their youth to show us the rays and beams of youth. It is something for us to think about. How much of respect should we be according to them, and how much are we really doing? May Allāh *ta'ālā* guide us. *Āmīn*.

The seniority of all these elders who are before us demands on us to show respect to them. We should never do anything to surpass them, we must not walk in front of them, we must not commence eating before them, and so on. These are all included in showing respect to them.

On one occasion, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* noticed Hadrat Abū Dardā' *radiyallāhu 'anhu* walking in front of Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu 'anhu*. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "O Abū Dardā! You are walking in front of a man who is better than you in this world and in the Hereafter. After the Prophets '*alayhimus salām*, the sun of this world neither rose nor set on a person who is superior to Abū Bakr."

This shows that juniors must show full consideration to seniors, bearing in mind the etiquette which have to be observed.

Sayings of the past elders with regard to good conduct

My dear friends! It is most essential to create reverence in our hearts for things which are worthy of respect, and then to accord respect to them. For example, respect for the *sha'ā'ir-al-Islām* (the salient features of Islam), the Qur'ān, *Dīnī* books, the musjid, different foods, a person of knowledge, one's teachers, parents, elders, and so on. Etiquette and good conduct are most important.

Hakīm al-Islam Hadrat Qārī Tayyib Sāhib rahimahullāh says: “Good conduct is a fundamental aspect of *Dīn*. The more a person's conduct and respect increase, the stronger his *Dīn* will become. The more disrespect in a person, the weaker his *Dīn*.”

Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī rahimahullāh says: “A disrespectful person is castigated and disliked by both the Creator and the creation.”

Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mubārak rahimahullāh says: “We are not in so much in need of a lot of knowledge as we are of a little respect.”

Imām Qirāfi rahimahullāh says: “A little good conduct and respect are better than many good actions.”

Another pious elder says:

اجْعَلْ عَمَلَكَ مِلْحًا وَأَدَبَكَ دَقِيقًا

Let your actions be like salt, and your good conduct like flour.”

In other words, good conduct must be as much as the large amount of flour and the little salt which is added to it. A few good deeds which are filled with good conduct are better than many good deeds lacking in good conduct.

My dear friends! Be very particular about and give a lot of importance to good conduct. Progress without this is not possible. It is also essential in the *Tarīqah* (the path of *taṣawwuf*).

طُرُقُ الْعِشْقِ كُلُّهَا آدَابُ
أَدَّبُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْأَصْحَابُ

All the paths of love [for Allāh] are made up of etiquette [and good conduct]. O friends! Set right your conduct.

A very important point concerning good conduct

When it comes to good conduct towards our elders, we have to remember one very important point. Good conduct means bringing comfort to a person. So when dealing with our pious elders, shaykh, teacher, father, mother, any other elder, we must do it in a manner which brings comfort to them, and not discomfort. This is the real meaning of good conduct. For example, if a certain pious elder dislikes people standing up for him out of respect when he enters an assembly, then not standing will be considered good conduct.

The understanding of Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ‘anhu*

We find a beautiful incident in this regard from the pure life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* when he was emigrating from Makkah to Madīnah. There were many people in Madīnah Munawwarah who had not seen Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ‘anhu*. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* reached Madīnah Munawwarah after a lengthy journey, people came in droves to see him and meet him. But they could not distinguish who was who. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* appeared to be more senior in age, so people assumed he was Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and went to shake hands with him. Look at the perfect understanding of Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ‘anhu*. He lowered his head and continued embracing the people and shaking hands with them without excusing himself. He did this because he knew Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* was tired after having undertaken such a lengthy journey. Conveying comfort to him at this point entailed saving him from the strain of having to meet all these people. This is what good conduct demanded in this situation.

Good conduct means bringing comfort

This is the real meaning of good conduct: If you want to show respect to someone, you must not cause him any discomfort. Some of those who are enamoured by a pious personality are only concerned about getting his blessings. They will not

bother if someone gets killed in the process of fulfilling their objective.

I heard Hadrat Mufti Muhammad Rafi' 'Uthmānī Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* quoting the following statement of his shaykh, Hadrat Doctor 'Abd al-Hayy 'Ārifī *rahimahullāh*, on several occasions. He used to say: "Those who are desirous of a pious personality can be divided into two groups. They are the *ahl-e-muhabbat* (people of love) and *ahl-e-'aqīdat* (those who have full confidence in the person). The *ahl-e-muhabbat* give full consideration to our needs, but it is a different matter with the *ahl-e-'aqīdat*. They are only worried about fulfilling their needs and objectives. It is only the *ahl-e-muhabbat* who really benefit because they are able to settle themselves into the heart of the pious personality."

My dear friends! Do not cause any discomfort to your elders. Etiquette demands on us not to cause the slightest discomfort to those whom we are supposed to be serving. This has to be our constant effort. We love our pious elders and righteous personalities but do not bother about their comfort. They are taken from one place to another without asking about what they want. This is a major wrong especially when they are old and sickly. We should rather ascertain their condition, temperament, make arrangements for their rest and comfort, seat them in one place, while we ourselves present ourselves to them and derive benefit from their company. Those who show concern for the comfort of these elders will derive internal spiritual benefits which will never be acquired by those who merely

“drag” these elders from one place to another solely to acquire external and material benefits.

Social etiquette

I would also like to say a few things about social etiquette. The *Dīn* can be divided into five departments: (1) beliefs, (2) acts of worship, (3) transactions, (4) social dealings, and (5) morals and character.

The essence of social relationships (*mu'āsharat*) is that no one must be harmed or discomforted by our demeanour and conduct. We have to learn the etiquette of social relationships so that we do not cause the slightest harm to anyone. The Shari'ah has laid down certain principles and regulations for our social life as regards our conduct with others, greeting, embracing and shaking hands, inviting, meeting and interacting, and so on. If we practise on these principles and regulations, everyone will be comforted and they will all be free from discomfort.

Let us take the guest as an example. A person comes to us as a guest. Obviously there are certain etiquette of hospitality. The Western way is to ask the guest: “Would you like a cup of tea?” Our way is to ask: “What would you like?”

This means: We would certainly like you to have something, but we are asking you the question so that we could ascertain what you like, and we do not present something to you which you do not like. If the guest refuses, we will ask him a second and a third time to remove the suspicion that he would like to have something but is shy to ask. After

asking him a second and third time, we will be convinced that he is not refusing out of shyness. Now if he refuses even after asking him a third time, but we still insist on giving him something, this will be against the etiquette of good social relationships because the guest will be discomforted by this.

Discomfort in the name of comfort

Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said a unique thing. He said: Do not discomfort the guest in the name of comfort. In other words, we think we are honouring him and providing comfort to him whereas we are causing discomfort to the poor fellow. While the host has to worry about providing food and drink to his guest, he also has to give due consideration to the wishes of the guest. He may have eaten elsewhere, he probably promised someone that he is going to have a meal with that person, he is probably not hungry at the time, he has to reach a certain place by a certain time, and so on. After offering him two or three times, you must leave him to decide. This will comfort him, and increase love at the same time. The benefits in this world and in the Hereafter which are in store for sacrificing your own wants in order to convey comfort to the other can never be found in the case of causing discomfort to another while fulfilling your wants. It is most essential to pay attention to this because it is impermissible and *harām* to cause discomfort to any believer.

The importance of ṣalāh with congregation

My dear friends! Learn social etiquette and be particular about practising on them because it is *ḥarām* to cause discomfort to anyone. Look! Ṣalāh with congregation is so important. Some jurists state that it is *wājib* (obligatory) to perform ṣalāh with congregation, while others say it is *sunnat-e-mu'akkadah* (an emphasised Sunnah). In both cases, a person who leaves it out without a valid excuse will be sinful. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* emphasised ṣalāh with congregation both through his statements and his actions. When he was on his death bed and it was difficult for him to walk during the final moments of his life, he appointed Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu 'anhu* to lead the people in ṣalāh. Even in such a condition, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* took support from two people and proceeded to the musjid to perform ṣalāh with the congregation. This shows how important it is to perform ṣalāh with congregation.

The following person is not permitted to come to the musjid

Despite the emphasis on ṣalāh with congregation, all the jurists unanimously state that a person who is suffering from an illness which causes a stench to emanate from his body and would therefore discomfort the rest of the congregation, then he should not come to the musjid for the congregational ṣalāh. Let alone being permitted to leave out the congregation, it is not permitted for him to come for it. If he comes to the musjid to join the congregation, he will be sinful. The reason for

this is that if he were to perform ṣalāh in the masjid with the congregation, he will be discomfoting the rest of the Muslims. Islam does not permit causing undue harm to anyone. So you see, despite the emphasised importance of the congregational ṣalāh, such a person has been prohibited from joining it solely because it would discomfort the rest of the congregation.

Kissing the Black Stone

Who can deny the virtue and importance of the Black Stone (Hajar-e-Aswad)? According to some narrations, this stone was brought from Paradise. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said: “The sins of a person who kisses the Black Stone are pardoned.” Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam himself kissed it, and when he kissed an item, is there anyone who would not desire to kiss it? Doctor Iqbāl had said:

When we kiss the Black Stone, we are really kissing the place which was kissed by Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. Apart from this, what virtue can a stone have in the sight of Muslims?

So on one hand, this is the position of the Black Stone. On the other hand, it is said to us that if there is the possibility of pushing a fellow Muslim or causing him some harm or the other in any way in the process of kissing it, then not only is it not permissible to kiss it, but a sin. And it is most necessary to save ourselves from sin.

Reading the Qur'ān in a loud voice

Reading the Qur'ān is a very meritorious act. Ten rewards are recorded for a single letter. It is better to read the Qur'ān in an audible tone than reading it silently, and there is more reward in it. But if your recitation is going to disturb a person who is performing ṣalāh, sleeping, or resting, then in such a case, it is not permissible for you to read in a loud voice.

Examples of inconveniencing Muslims

My dear brothers! There are dozens of other examples in which lack of caution results in committing the sin of harming or discomforting a Muslim. For example, a person has just completed his ṣalāh and is now engaged in his *ma'mulāt* (devotional practices). It would be disturbing to him if you were to go and shake hands with him or converse with him. If you are in a hurry, you must depart without shaking hands with him. Why do you have to disturb someone?

Similarly, it is disturbing to shake hands or meet a person in-between his Sunnah and optional ṣalāhs. To await an occupied person in a manner which could distract him would result in disturbing and discomforting him.

There are many items in the house which are used by several people, and there are special places for these items. You took an item, used it, and did not return it to its place. Now when someone else needs it, the poor person is inconvenienced because he cannot find it. These are all against social etiquette, and also cause harm to others.

You go to a toilet and leave it dirty, you use the wash-basin in an aeroplane and leave without cleaning it – this causes inconvenience to the person who enters after you. This is against social etiquette. There are countless other occasions which need special attention. In short, we must not do anything which would discomfort or inconvenience anyone.

Paying particular attention to social etiquette

Together with instructing us to adhere to social etiquette, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* himself was very particular about it. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* was delayed in returning at night and he had to pass the *As-hāb as-Suffah*,¹ he would offer *salām* in a tone which could be heard by those who are awake, but would not disturb those who are asleep. Look at how he took due consideration of those who were awake and those who were asleep! Had he not offered the *salām*, those who were awake would have been deprived of it. Had he offered it in a loud voice, those who were sleeping would have woken up, and they would have been disturbed.

Rasūlullāh’s *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* manner of waking up for *tahajjud*

Look at Rasūlullāh’s *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* caution when waking up for *tahajjud*. He could not

¹ *Suffah* is a raised platform in *Musjid-e-Nabawī* which was set aside for poor Muslims during the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. Shelter and food was provided to them by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*.

tolerate disturbing anyone in the least. His pure wives – the mothers of the believers – relate that when he used to get up for *tahajjud*, he would carry out all his tasks without disturbing them in the least. He would get up silently, and open the door silently out of consideration for them. Look at the extent of consideration he showed in whatever he did. If only we could appreciate these teachings and adopt these blessed ways.

Read the book *Ādāb al-Mu'āsharat*

May Allāh *ta'ālā* reward Hadrat Hakim al-Ummat *rahimahullāh*. He compiled a small booklet titled, *Ādāb al-Mu'āsharat*, in which he discusses many social etiquette. This booklet ought to be in every Muslim home, and every person ought to study it. Similarly, the books *Ta'lim ad-Dīn*, and the tenth part of *Bahishtī Zewar* must be studied. If a few of these etiquette are read collectively and daily either in the masjid or at home, it will be very beneficial – *inshā Allāh*.

My personal experience

My dear friends! When due attention is paid to social etiquette, everyone experiences comfort. On one occasion I was sitting with Hadrat Aqdas Mufti Muhammad Rafi' Sāhib 'Uthmānī *dāmat barakātuhum* in the *maṭāf* between the *maghrib* and 'ishā *salāh*, and I needed to get up and leave. While seeking his permission to leave, I said to him: "Hadrat, *inshā Allāh*, you will be seated here until the 'ishā *salāh*?" Hadrat replied: "That is what I intend to do." I said: "When I complete whatever I have to do, I will come back to you." Hadrat

probably thought to himself: “If I had to get up for some need in his absence, and he were to return to this spot, he will be inconvenienced at not finding me here, and he might have to go around searching for me.” Hadrat may have also thought this: “If he is unable to return here for whatever reason, I will be worried about where he is. And he too will think to himself that Hadrat Mufti Sāhib must be worried about him.”

It is probably for these reasons that when I was about to leave, he said to me: “It is my intention to remain seated here, but let me be free to go anywhere if I have to, and you are also free, and you do not have to compel yourself to return here.”

At the time, I did not pay any particular attention to what he said. But when I returned to the place where I was staying and found a few guests waiting for me – and who remained seated with me until the *‘ishā adhān* – that is when I really valued Hadrat’s words. I thought in my heart: “Look at Hadrat’s advice which was so comforting to both of us!”

My dear brothers! There is a lot of comfort in social etiquette, so be very particular about it. If you make a promise with someone, or have an appointment with someone and you are delayed because of the traffic or some other reason, you must certainly inform him so that you do not put him through the inconvenience of having to wait for you.

A unique incident of visiting the sick

Let me add another point since we are talking about social etiquette. When we go to visit a sick

person, we do not bother about getting up and leaving quickly. The poor sick person has to bear our presence, and we do not know how much he is inconvenienced in the process. Mullā ‘Alī Qārī *rahimahullāh* relates an incident in *Mirqāt Sharh Mishkāt*: A person fell ill, and people began coming to visit him. One of those who came to visit remained seated there and made no move whatsoever of leaving. People continued arriving and departing, but he remained in his place. The sick person made a subtle reference to this by saying: “The large number of visitors has left me discomforted.” The reference was actually to the person who was sitting there for so long. But the poor fellow did not catch the reference, and said: “Hadrat! If you agree, I will close the door.” The patient said: “Yes, you must certainly close it, but not from the inside; from the outside.”

In the first case, a sick person is already in pain and discomfort; and now he has to suffer additional inconvenience from those who are visiting him. Yes, if a person knows for a fact that remaining for a long time with the sick person will bring him more joy, then there is no harm in sitting there longer than normal. This is because he will not be inconveniencing him, rather, he will be comforting him.

Similarly, we go to meet a person. We think that because we are free and have plenty of time to our disposal, everyone else is also free. So we remain seated there for several hours without bothering in the least about the person’s needs or occupations. Very well, we went to meet him, and obtained his

permission. But now we must sit there for a short while and depart. If there is a need for a lengthy meeting, we must make an appointment from before hand.

Speaking on the telephone for long periods of time

Mufti Muḥammad Shafī' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes in *Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān* that if you have to speak to a person for a long time over the telephone, you must first obtain his permission. Ask him: "I need to talk to you for some time. If you are free at present, I will continue the conversation. If not, tell me a suitable time to phone you later on."

Imagine if you were to phone him while he is busy doing some work, or entertaining his guests. And now you phone him and continue speaking to him for twenty minutes. Imagine the inconvenience you will be causing him!

Teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam

My dear brothers! We are so overjoyed at studying the teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Glory to Allāh! Look at the different etiquette which he taught us! If these etiquette and teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam were to come in our lives and the non-Muslims had the opportunity of observing them in us, they would certainly be affected. Look at the different angles which he considered in each etiquette. Yet there is so much of negative propaganda against Islam. The fact of the matter is that the amount of consideration which Islam has

accorded to the comfort of the creation has not been accorded by anyone else.

My dear friends! I suffice with these words. We must leave here with the firm resolution of paying full attention to good conduct and good social etiquette. Read the necessary books on this subject, remain in the company of the '*ulamā*' and *mashā'ikh*, and make a full effort to embellish your self with good conduct and manners. May Allāh *ta'ālā* give us the inspiration to practise. Āmīn.

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ



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May Allāh *ta'ālā* accept this humble effort, and may He make it a means for our salvation in this world and the Hereafter. Āmīn.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ، وَثُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

I request the reader to inform me of any mistakes, typographical errors, etc. in this translation. Constructive criticism and suggestions on how to improve this work are most welcome. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

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